

Washington Metropolitan Area District Office
740 15TH Street, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005

News Release Date: July 14, 2008
News Release Number: 08-17

Contact: Diane Bynum, (202) 272-0365
Internet Address: diane.bynum@sba.gov



Dreams Do Come True!

Grace Dittmar is President and CEO of Trusted Mission Solutions, Inc. an IT and management consulting service provider based in McLean, Virginia that serves primarily federal government clients. Trusted Mission Solutions, Inc. has grown to 50 employees and expects to reach \$8M in revenue this year.

After many years of dreaming, Ms. Dittmar finally decided to start her own business with the encouragement and mentoring of a former successful 8(a) graduate, Reynaldo Maduro, Sr. Ms. Dittmar quit her job and founded Trusted Mission Solutions, Inc. In October, 2001, she incorporated and was certified in SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program on August 15, 2002. She had the good fortune to be additionally mentored by another successful 8(a) graduate, Arthur Kim.

The 8(a) Business Development Program is an essential instrument for helping socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs gain access to the economic mainstream of American society. SBA has helped thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs over the years to gain a foothold in government contracting. Participation is divided into two phases over nine years: a four-year developmental stage and a five-year transition stage.

Participants can receive sole-source contracts, up to a ceiling of \$3.5 million for goods and services and \$5 million for manufacturing. While SBA helps 8(a) firms build their competitive and institutional know-how, the agency also encourages them to participate in competitive acquisitions.

To qualify for program certification, a small business must be owned and controlled by a socially and economically disadvantaged person. Under the Small Business Act, certain presumed groups include African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Native Americans, and Subcontinent Asian Americans. New rules make it easier for non-minority firms to participate by proving their social disadvantage.

Ms. Dittmar attributes her early success to securing contracts, seeking financing and creating a sound strategic plan. She also took advantage of SCORE to assist with setting up a financial infrastructure. Initially the business did not grow as fast as planned. Ms. Dittmar faced the many

challenges that most business do: working the second shift on accounting and proposals while marketing and earning revenue during the day; persuading new clients to use her company without a proven track record; dealing with the unexpected loss of contracts due to client funding changes; and attempting to recruit talented individuals during the “dot bomb” era for a start-up business.

Now, Trusted Mission Solutions, Inc. has been ranked 74th of the Top 100 fastest growing companies in the Metropolitan area by Inc. Magazine. Trusted Missions Solutions, Inc. has reaped the benefits of participating in SBA’s Mentor-Protégé Program with Base Technologies, Inc., another successful 8(a) graduate. This relationship has allowed Trusted Mission Solutions to pursue and win larger contracts. Recently, Ms. Dittmar was able to form an 8(a) joint venture and won a Department of State five-year contract with a ceiling value of over \$100M.

To whom much is given, much is required. Ms. Dittmar is now focused on giving back to the community after surviving the establishment of her business. Trusted Mission Solutions has been a corporate sponsor for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk and has supported organizations such as the Asian American Justice Center and the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN). Ms. Dittmar also served 3 years as a small business representative on the GSA Information Technology Industry Government Council.

###